Microsoft

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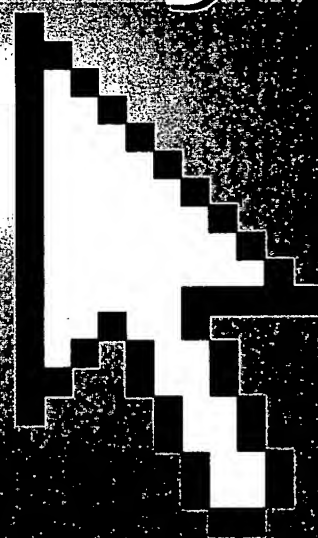ENTRIES

Microsoft
Computer
Dictionary
Fifth Edition

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the virus also changes the registry, infects the Normal.dot Word template (which, in turn, infects new documents), and, in Office 2000, disables the Word macro virus warning. Although the Melissa virus does not destroy data, it can affect e-mail performance through the increased volume of messages. If an infected document is open at a time when the day of the month is the same as the minute value of the current time, the virus inserts the text "Twenty-two points, plus triple-word-score, plus fifty points for using all my letters. Game's over. I'm outta here" at the current location of the cursor. The virus was named after an acquaintance of the hacker who developed it.

meltdown *n.* **1.** The complete collapse of a computer network caused by a higher level of traffic than the network can support. The term refers, by analogy, to the accidental melting down of a nuclear reactor core. **2.** Colloquially, the breakdown of a person, usually in a job situation, caused by overwork, stress, or failure.

member *n.* **1.** In object-oriented programming, a variable or routine that is part of a class. *See also* C++, class. **2.** A value that is part of a set data structure. *See also* set² (definition 1).

membrane keyboard *n.* A keyboard in which an unbroken plastic or rubber shell (a membrane) covers keys that have little or no travel (movement). Rather than use normal, full-travel keys, membrane keyboards use pressure-sensitive areas that are sometimes, but not always, defined by small bumps under the membrane.

memo field *n.* A field in a database file that can contain unstructured text.

memo pad *n.* A note-taking feature offered by many personal digital assistants and other handheld computing devices. Memo pad allows for the entry of short notes via typing or handwriting recognition applications. The notes can be categorized, organized, and edited later.

memory *n.* A device where information can be stored and retrieved. In the most general sense, memory can refer to external storage such as disk drives or tape drives; in common usage, it refers only to a computer's main memory, the fast semiconductor storage (RAM) directly connected to the processor. *See also* core, EEPROM, EPROM, flash memory, PROM, RAM, ROM. *Compare* bubble memory, mass storage.

memory bank *n.* The physical location on a motherboard where a memory module can be inserted. *See also* bank (definition 1).

memory board *n.* A plug-in printed circuit board that contains one or more memory chips. *See also* memory chip.

memory cache *n. See* CPU cache.

memory card *n.* A memory module that is used to extend RAM storage capacity or in place of a hard disk in a portable computer, such as a laptop, notebook, or handheld PC. The module is usually the size of a credit card and can be plugged into a PCMCIA-compliant portable computer. The module can be composed of EPROM, RAM, or ROM chips or flash memory. *Also called:* RAM card, ROM card. *See also* EPROM, flash memory, handheld PC, hard disk, memory cartridge, module (definition 2), PCMCIA, RAM, ROM.

memory cartridge *n.* A plug-in module containing RAM (random access memory) chips that can be used to store data or programs. Memory cartridges are used primarily in portable computers as smaller, lighter (but more expensive) substitutes for disk drives. Memory cartridges typically use either a nonvolatile form of RAM, which does not lose its contents when power is turned off, or battery-backed RAM, which maintains its contents by drawing current from a rechargeable battery within the cartridge. *Also called:* RAM cartridge. *See also* memory card, RAM. *Compare* ROM cartridge.

memory cell *n.* An electronic circuit that stores one bit of data. *See also* bit.

memory chip *n.* An integrated circuit devoted to memory storage. The memory storage can be *volatile* and hold data temporarily, such as RAM, or *nonvolatile* and hold data permanently, such as ROM, EPROM, EEPROM, or PROM. *See also* EEPROM, EPROM, integrated circuit, memory board, nonvolatile memory, PROM, RAM, volatile memory.

memory management *n.* **1.** In operating systems for personal computers, procedures for optimizing the use of RAM (random access memory). These procedures include selectively storing data, monitoring it carefully, and freeing memory when the data is no longer needed. Most current operating systems optimize RAM usage on their own; some older operating systems, such as early versions of MS-DOS, required the use of third-party utilities to optimize RAM usage and necessitated that the user be more

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